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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY,
MARCH 19, 2003

1. This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for March 19, 2003. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

2. Milliyet/Turkiye/Tercuman/Dunya/Hurriyet: Kurds in northern Iraq who are afraid that Saddam may launch a chemical attack started fleeing toward the Turkish and Iranian borders. The number who have left their houses has reached 20,000 people. Thousands of people leaving Kirkuk, Mosul, Dohuk and its townships moved toward locations close to the Turkish border, such as Selidiza, Sersing, Batufa, Begopva, and Bamerni. While some of the Kurds stay with their relatives in those places, the others set up tents. In the meantime, Kurdish holders of passports with dual citizenship entered Turkey from Habur border gate.

3. Cumhuriyet: Turkey is considering setting up camps in northern Iraq to help thousands of refugees in the war. Turkey is not planning to seal its borders but will allow "controlled passes" into Turkey. Iran announced that it would not except refugees into the country but would help them on the Iraqi side of the border. While civilians in Kirkuk try to go to safer mountainous Kurdish region in the North, it is reported that the Iraqi soldiers in Kirkuk are demoralized and ready to surrender. It has been announced from that municipality's loudspeakers that anyone who went out of their houses would be shot during the war.

4. Tercuman: The Red Cross and Red Crescent Federation announced that it has prepared the largest emergency relief operation in its history. The Federation has units poised in Iraq and neighboring countries to supply refugees' needs, including field hospitals, potable water, toilet facilities, and other urgent necessities. The Federation expects to give services to at least one million people a month in those units. The Federation has prepared sheltering facilities for up to 250,000 refugees who might flee from Iraq to Iran, Jordan, Syria, and Turkey. The camps on the Turkish side have been rechecked and any shortcomings have been rectified.

5. Milliyet/Radikal/Sabah/Tercuman: In a joint meeting of representatives from the US, Turkey, and Iraqi Kurds and Turkmens in Ankara, it was agreed that the Kurds will not enter Mosul and Kirkuk. The US will administer the region. Turkmens will be included in Iraq's new administration. An independent Kurdish will not be founded. The US envoy, Zalmay Khalilzad, warned the Kurds against rioting. Turkey said it could unilaterally enter northern Iraq to stop refugee flows; the Kurds rejected Turkey's possible unilateral incursion. Khalilzad announced Turkey should act in harmony with the coalition forces, and urged a "commission of five parties" under US leadership - and including Turkey, IKDP, PUK, and Turkmens -- to be established to deal with migration, combating terrorism, and other issues.

6. Cumhuriyet/Radikal: It is reported that the "Repubblica Drima" Italian-flag vessel was not allowed to offload six of its containers, including ammunitions for Stinger missiles and tanks. Stingers had been offloaded some time ago from a different freighter for the protection of US bases in Turkey. Based on instructions by the Turkish General Staff, the lids of the freighter were kept locked.

17. Cumhuriyet/Radikal/Evrensel: Based on increased tension and security concerns the Department of State announced a public warning that US citizens in 23 provinces in Southeast Turkey should leave the region and postpone any nonessential travel there. While the Department of State initiated authorized departure from the Consulate in Adana, the Pentagon authorized voluntary departure of dependents of military personnel at Incirlik AB.

18. Cumhuriyet/Radikal/Sabah/Tercuman/Dunya/Hurri yet: As tension has mounted prior the war, Incirlik AB was put on alert status "Charlie", the status before the war. The announcement of the next level, "Delta", will mean war has started.

19. Evrensel: "Regional Crisis Management Centers" have been established in the provinces in the region. The purpose of these centers is coordinate relief operations together with international relief organizations. In addition, it has been announced that press members without credentials are prohibited from working in Diyarbakir, Mardin, Batman, Sirnak, Hakkari and Van provinces. The credentials cards issued by the Diyarbakir Press Center will be valid for a period of two months and should be carried with a valid ID card or passport.

110. Evrensel: It has been announced by Adana's Labor, Peace and Democracy Block, made up of DEHAP, EMEP, labor unions, and NGOs, that Newroz festivities will be held at the Yuregir Secondhand Auto Market Lot in Adana at 10:00 a.m. on March 21. Various concerts will play Turkish, Kurdish, and Arabic tunes.

111. Evrensel: On the grounds of being unproductive, the Vocational School of Agriculture along the Van-Ercis highway is being turned into F-type prison. No new students have been enrolled for the past two years, and the school currently has only 16 students. Of the school's 12,700 acres, only 750 acres will be left to the school while the remainder will be turned over to the Justice Ministry for prison.

112. Turkiye: Based on a tip, jandarma arrested nine persons in Sati village of Diyarbakir. While searching the car of one of the detainees, jandarma found 300 grams of heroin in secret compartments of the vehicle. In Malatya, the police seized 4 kilograms of heroin in a house.
HOLTZ